

IN THE CLAIMS:

The status of the claims is as follows:

Claims 1-88 (canceled)

89. (currently amended) An ornamental item and coupling apparatus, the coupling apparatus comprising:

a substantially planar, semi-rigid backer having opposed first and second major surfaces, said backer having at least first and second spaced openings extending therethrough;

a tying element **tied around** ~~securable to~~ said ornamental item, said tying element having first and second opposite ends received in said first and second spaced openings, respectively, said first end secured to said second end to form a continuous loop, thereby releasably securing an ornamental item to said first major surface of said backer;

a first **component of a hook and loop** fastener having opposed first and second surfaces, said first surface of said first **component** ~~fastener secured~~ **adhered** to said second major surface of said backer;

a second **component of said hook and loop** fastener having opposed first and second surfaces, said first surface of said second **component** ~~fastener secured~~ **adhered** to an object, wherein said second surface of said first **component** ~~fastener~~ is releasably securable to said second surface of said second **component** ~~fastener~~.

90. (canceled)

91. (previously presented) The coupling apparatus of claim 89, wherein said backer is formed from a material selected from the group consisting of plastic, cardboard, card stock, wood, and poster board.

92. (previously presented) The coupling apparatus of claim 91, wherein said backer has a thickness of between about 0.03 inch and about 0.07 inch.

93. (currently amended) The coupling apparatus of claim 89, wherein said tying element is selected from the group consisting of a coated wire, a metal wire, a twist tie, ribbon, a nylon strip, string, a zip lock tie, and a plastic strap.

94. (currently amended) The coupling apparatus of claim 89, wherein the ornamental item is selected from the group consisting of a ribbon, a bow, a crayon box, a stuffed animal toy, a flower, and a flower tube, ~~and a barrette~~.

95. (previously presented) The coupling apparatus of claim 89, wherein said first and second openings are circular in configuration.

96. (currently amended) The coupling apparatus of claim 89, wherein said backer includes first and second opposite ends, a first cut-out extending from a periphery

of said first end to said first opening, and a second cut-out extending from the periphery of said second end to said second opening, ~~wherein each corresponding cut-out and opening have a key hole configuration.~~

97. (currently amended) The coupling apparatus of claim 89, wherein each of said openings **is configured as an elongate slit** ~~includes a first slit and a second slit adjoining said first slit and angularly disposed relative to said first slit.~~

98. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 96, wherein each corresponding cut-out and opening have a key hole configuration.

99. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 89, wherein said tying element is releaseably tied around said ornamental item.

100. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 89, wherein said backer includes a groove extending between and interconnecting said first opening and said second opening.

101. (new) An ornamental item and coupling apparatus, the coupling apparatus comprising:

a barrette having a clasp having an elongate leg having a first end connected to an underside of said barrette, and a second end opposite said first

end releasably securable to said underside, said clasp forming a continuous loop when said second end is secured to said underside;

a substantially planar, semi-rigid backer having opposed first and second major surfaces, said backer having at least first and second spaced openings extending therethrough, said elongate leg extending through said first and second openings so that said first end is proximate said first opening and said second leg is proximate said second opening, said barrette releasably securable to said backer;

a fastener having a first surface secured to said second major surface of said backer, and a second surface securable to an object, said fastener selected from the group consisting of an interlocking fastener and an adhesive strip.

102. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 101, wherein said fastener is an adhesive strip selected from the group consisting of doubled-sided tape, an adhesive composition with a protective release covering, pressure sensitive adhesive, a sticky backing, removable double sided strip, and removable double sided strip with a non-adhesive tab.

103. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 101, wherein said fastener is a hoop and loop fastener.

104. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 101, wherein said backer is formed from a material selected from the group consisting of plastic, cardboard, card stock, wood, and poster board.
105. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 104, wherein said backer has a thickness of between about 0.03 inch and about 0.07 inch.
106. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 101, wherein each of said openings is configured as an elongate slit.
107. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 106, wherein each of said slits is arrow-shaped.
108. (new) An ornamental item and coupling apparatus, the coupling apparatus comprising:
- a substantially planar, semi-rigid backer having opposed first and second major surfaces, said backer having at least first and second spaced openings extending therethrough;
 - an elastic band forming a continuous loop extending through said first and second spaced openings, said elastic band releasably securing an ornamental item to said first major surface of said backer;

a fastener having a first surface secured to said second major surface of said backer, and a second surface securable to an object, said fastener selected from the group consisting of an interlocking fastener and an adhesive strip.

109. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 108, wherein said fastener comprises a first component of a hook and loop fastener having opposed first and second surfaces, said first surface of said first component secured to said second major surface of said backer, and a second component of said hook and loop fastener having opposed first and second surfaces, said first surface of said second component securable to an object wherein said second surface of said first component is releasably securable to said second surface of said second component.
110. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 109, wherein said first surface of said second component of said hook and loop fastener further comprises an adhesive layer and a protective release covering, said adhesive layer securable to the object upon removal of said protective release covering.
111. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 108, wherein the ornamental item is selected from the group consisting of a ribbon, a bow, a crayon box, a stuffed animal toy, a flower, and a flower tube.

112. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 108, wherein said first and second openings are circular in configuration.
113. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 108, wherein said backer includes first and second opposite ends, a first cut-out extending from a periphery of said first end to said first opening, and a second cut-out extending from the periphery of said second end to said second opening.
114. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 113, wherein each corresponding cut-out and opening have a key-hole configuration.
115. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 108, wherein said backer includes a groove extending between and interconnecting said first opening and said second opening.
116. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 108, wherein said backer is formed from a material selected from the group consisting of plastic, cardboard, card stock, wood, and poster board.
117. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 116, wherein said backer has a thickness of between about 0.03 inch and about 0.07 inch.

118. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 108, wherein said fastener is an adhesive strip selected from the group consisting of doubled-sided tape, an adhesive composition with a protective release covering, pressure sensitive adhesive, a sticky backing, removable double sided strip, and removable double sided strip with a non-adhesive tab.

119. (new) An ornamental item and coupling apparatus, the coupling apparatus comprising:

a substantially planar, semi-rigid backer having opposed first and second major surfaces, said backer having at least first and second spaced openings extending therethrough;

a tying element tied around said ornamental item, said tying element having first and second opposite ends received in said first and second spaced openings, respectively, said first end secured to said second end to form a continuous loop, thereby releasably securing an ornamental item to said first major surface of said backer;

a fastener having a first surface secured to said second major surface of said planar, semi-rigid backer, and a second surface securable to an object, said fastener selected from the group consisting of an interlocking fastener and an adhesive strip.

120. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 119, wherein said tying element is selected from the group consisting of a coated wire, a metal wire, a twist tie, ribbon, a nylon strip, string, a zip lock tie, and a plastic strap.
121. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 119, wherein said tying element is releaseably tied around said ornamental item.
122. (new) The coupling apparatus of claim 119, wherein said fastener is an adhesive strip selected from the group consisting of doubled-sided tape, an adhesive composition with a protective release covering, pressure sensitive adhesive, a sticky backing, removable double sided strip, and removable double sided strip with a non-adhesive tab.